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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 000068

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TAGS: PREL KSCA PTER AF PK IN CH

SUBJECT: PRC VFM HE YAFEI IN INDIA: STILL SEEKING TO REDUCE TENSION IN SOUTH ASIA

REF: A. BEIJING 11

1B. JANUARY 9 EAP/CM-EMBASSY BEIJING EMAIL

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Aubrey Carlson. Reasons 1. 4 (B/D).

¶11. (C) Summary: PRC Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei's January 5-6 trip to India focused on encouraging India to ease tensions with Pakistan, MFA Asian Affairs Department DDG Sun Weidong told PolMinCouns January 9. Given Pakistan's willingness to cooperate on counter-terrorism efforts, China hopes India "will not close the door on dialogue" with Pakistan. DDG Sun urged the United States to use its "special influence" in South Asia to bring current tensions to a "soft landing soon." China will not form a judgment on India's information on Pakistani involvement in the Mumbai terror attacks but hopes India and Pakistan will cooperate to combat terrorism. PolMinCouns stated that the United States encourages India-Pakistan information sharing and emphasized that Pakistan holding accountable the perpetrators of the Mumbai attacks is a crucial first step in surmounting tensions and resuming positive movement in relations between India and Pakistan. End Summary.

¶12. (C) As a follow-up to his December 28-30 visit to Pakistan (ref A), Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei traveled to India January 5-6 to "persuade" India to maintain peaceful means in addressing the situation in South Asia and to ease tensions with Pakistan, MFA Asian Affairs Department Deputy Director General Sun Weidong told PolMinCouns January 9. VFM He, sent to New Delhi as Special Envoy, met with Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee (where the two sides exchanged letters from their respective foreign ministers on the current situation in South Asia and bilateral issues), National Security Advisor Narayanan and Foreign Secretary Menon.

PRC: Pakistan willing to cooperate

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¶13. (C) DDG Sun said the Chinese side offered the Indians details of VFM He's recent trip to Pakistan, stressing that Pakistan is willing to take effective measures against terrorism and does not seek conflict with India. Pakistan hopes to resume the "peace process" with India as soon as possible and wishes to resolve bilateral conflicts through dialogue and negotiations, DDG Sun said.

¶14. (C) China's position is that India and Pakistan are the "key" to peace, stability and development in South Asia, according to Sun, and that maintaining stability between India and Pakistan "is in India's long-terms interests." The stability and development of Pakistan are also "vitally important" to fighting terrorism. Noting that India and Pakistan are "friendly neighbors," DDG Sun said that China's relations with its two South Asia neighbors "are treated in parallel and are not a zero-sum game." China determines its

policies "according to the merit" of the issues and does not take an "unbalanced position toward any side." China hopes the two sides will solve their problems through diplomacy and cooperation in order to "fight terrorism together and promote peace in the South Asia sub-continent." China hopes India "does not close the door to dialogue" but rather considers measures to gradually ease tensions with Pakistan and "reopen dialogue and cooperation at the proper moment."

India: Pakistan must act on information

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16. (C) DDG Sun reported that the Indian side welcomed He's visit, reiterated its anti-terrorism stance and shared with the Chinese evidence on Pakistani involvement in the November 26 Mumbai terror attacks. The Indian Government believes it has provided enough evidence to Pakistan for the Pakistani Government to further investigate and respond to India, DDG Sun said. India has requested Pakistan to hand over suspects involved in the Mumbai attacks for trial in India and to take "effective and substantive" measures to prevent further terrorist attacks. India does not wish to engage in war with Pakistan and believes a stable Pakistan supports regional counter-terrorism efforts, DDG Sun stated. India indicated that though bilateral channels with Pakistan remain open, returning relations to a "normal" state soon will be difficult.

PRC: United States must bring "soft landing"

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17. (C) The United States and China have common interests in  
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maintaining peace in the region, DDG Sun said, and he urged the United States to use its "special influence" in South Asia to maintain peace and promote counter-terrorism efforts "in a balanced and fair manner." China hopes the United States "pushes India and Pakistan in the same direction rather than apart" and through dialogue and bilateral consultations brings the current tensions to a "soft landing soon." China wishes to keep close contact with the United States on the South Asia situation, DDG Sun added.

18. (C) Asked whether or not the Chinese Government finds the evidence of Pakistani involvement in the Mumbai attacks presented by India convincing, DDG Sun said that China is still studying the large amount of materials India presented. Sun noted that Pakistan refers to India's presentation as "material," not "evidence," and claims "to need more proof." "China will not make a judgment" on the information, DDG Sun said, adding that China wishes to see India and Pakistan resolve the issue through cooperative dialogue.

19. (C) Asked about India's request to hand over for prosecution Pakistan-based individuals involved in the attacks, DDG Sun said India and Pakistan do not have an extradition treaty but that cooperation is in their common interests. (Note: While aware of the SAARC Regional Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, DDG Sun did not comment as to its application in addressing the Mumbai terrorist attack, except to say that that agreement is for handling multilateral issues, not bilateral disputes.) DDG Sun said Pakistani officials emphasize that Pakistan has also been a victim of terrorism, having lost over 2000 citizens in 2008.

10. (C) Pressed on whether or not India asked China to influence Pakistan to act on India's demands, DDG Sun said that while India recognizes China's close ties to Pakistan, China believes current tensions must be resolved through dialogue between Pakistan and India. China will in its own way and through its own channels continue to encourage both sides to cooperate, but China will not act as go-between.

United States stresses need for Pakistan to act

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¶11. (C) PolMinCouns presented points on SCA A/S Boucher's ongoing visit to South Asia (ref A), stressing the need for Pakistan and Afghanistan to work together to defeat insurgent activities on their shared border. PolMinCouns also noted U.S. planning for the next Friends of a Democratic Pakistan meetings and the Donors' Conference in Tokyo that Japan has offered to host. The United States encourages India-Pakistan information sharing and cooperation to bring to justice those responsible for the Mumbai attacks. PolMinCouns emphasized that Pakistan holding accountable the perpetrators of the Mumbai attacks is a crucial first step in surmounting tensions and resuming positive movement in relations between India and Pakistan.

"Good momentum" in China-India relations.

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¶12. (C) Turning to China-India bilateral relations, DDG Sun stated that "good momentum" continues between the two countries, citing frequent high-level visits, a bilateral trade volume expected to have surpassed USD 50 billion in 2008 and increased people-to-people contacts. As two emerging economies, DDG Sun said, "China and India can learn much from each other." DDG Sun commented that differences continue on resolving the border issue but leadership on both sides has agreed that the issue should not be allowed to affect the overall bilateral relationship.

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